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Fantastic Four®

ONSLAUGHT PHASE 1

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415

Set THE FABULOUS FANTASTIC FOUR FACE THE UNSTOPPABLE MENACE OF ONSLAUGHT!

AN ENEMY AMONG US!

A STAN LEE PRESENTATION

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SUDDEN BURSTS OF *LAUGHTER* MINGLE WITH GASPS OF *AMAZEMENT* IN THIS TINY *BAVARIAN* VILLAGE, AS THE SCENTS OF FRESHLY MADE PRETZELS AND ROASTING *SAUSAGES* WRESTLE IN THE AIR.

ENJOYING THE *CIRCUS*, FRANKLIN?

THIS PLACE IS *SOOO VERY COOOL!*

WHERE *ARE* WE, CHARLIE? HOW'D WE *GET* HERE?!

YOU DID IT, FRANKLIN! *YOU* BROUGHT US HERE.

YOU SAW THESE *IMAGES* WITHIN MY MIND... AND MADE THEM *REAL.*

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BUT HOW CAN I -- ARGNN-- MY HEAD!

I-IT *HURTS!*

A LOT!

TRY TO BE *STRONG*, FRANKLIN.

I KNOW THE STRAIN OF HOLDING SUCH A DETAILED ILLUSION IS *TERRIBLE* --

-- BUT I CAN HELP YOU *BEAT* THE PAIN.

ALL YOU HAVE TO DO IS *CONCENTRATE*, AND FOCUS YOUR THOUGHTS ON THE *PICTURES* WHICH YOU SEE INSIDE *MY* HEAD.

THERE! I KNEW YOU COULD DO IT!

B-BUT MY BRAIN STILL FEELS LIKE IT'S ON *FIRE.*

SOMETIMES YOU HAVE TO DO THINGS THAT *HURT*...

... ESPECIALLY IF YOU WANT TO LEARN HOW TO *PROTECT* YOUR FAMILY.

THIS ISN'T *RIGHT*, CHARLES! NOR IS IT LIKE *YOU*... BUT IT IS LIKE THE *OTHER* ONE.

THE CHILD IS AN *INNOCENT* --

-- AND HE SHOULD *NOT* BE DRAWN INTO YOUR GRASPING WEB.

I PRAY THAT SOME SHRED OF *YOUR* FORMER DECENCY REMAINS, AND THAT YOU WILL SET HIM FREE.

WHO IS THIS LADY, CHARLIE?

IS SHE YOUR MOMMA?!

HER NAME IS MAGDA. SHE IS SOMEONE WE... I ONCE KNEW...

LONG, LONG AGO!

RRRR

4 MOMENTS LATER, IN THE FANTASTIC FOUR'S SPACE/TIME LAB...

THE SHUTTLE'S FINALLY LOCKED BACK INTA PLACE, STRETCH!

THIS CRATE MAY BE FINE FOR CRUISIN' THROUGH SUB-SPACE, BUT IT SURE MAKES A HECKUVA *RACKET!*

I CAN ALWAYS DESIGN A MORE EFFICIENT NOISE-DAMPENING SYSTEM, BEN --

-- BUT THAT WILL HAVE TO WAIT UNTIL I GIVE A BIG *HUG* TO MY *FAVORITEST* LITTLE MAN IN THE WHOLE UNIVERSE!

HEY, DAD! YOU MISS ME?

ALWAYS!

*THOUGH HE HAS CROSSED GALAXIES AND VIEWED WONDERS FAR BEYOND THE KEN OF MOST MORTAL MEN, **REED RICHARDS** KNOWS NO GREATER THRILL THAN THE LOVING EMBRACE OF HIS YOUNG SON...*

I'M *STARVIN'*, LANG! I HOPE YA'VE BEEN TA A FOOD STORE WHILE THE REST'A US WERE OUT JOYRIDIN'!

I CALLED YOUR FAVORITE PIZZA PARLOR AS SOON AS I HEARD THE SHUTTLE.

YA ORDERED A SUPER DELUXE?!

WITH EXTRA PEPPERONI AND ANCHOVIES!

=AHEM= I TRUST YOU HAVE NO PROBLEMS TO REPORT?

NONE AT ALL.

FRANKLIN, DID YOU DO ANYTHING SPECIAL WHILE MOMMY AND DADDY WERE AWAY?

Uh...

... NOPE.

NOT REALLY.

JOHNNY --?

HER NAME IS LYJA.

SHE'S A SKRULL --

-- AN ALIEN SHAPE-SHIFTER WHO WAS ONCE MARRIED TO THE HUMAN TORCH.

YOU AND I SHOULD TALK.

IN PRIVATE.

YEAH! YOU GOT *THAT* RIGHT!

EVEN AS JOHNNY STORM AND LYJA QUIETLY SLIP AWAY, THE OILY VOICE OF NATHANIEL RICHARDS IGNITES THE AIR...

LET'S HAVE A PARTY!

WE SHOULD CELEBRATE OUR VICTORY OVER *HYPERSTORM.*

OUR VICTORY--?!

YOU NEVER WOULD HAVE BEATEN HIM WITHOUT THE INFORMATION WHICH I SO GRACIOUSLY SUPPLIED.

WHY YA MISERABLE TWO-FACED --!

PUT HIM *DOWN,* BEN.

EXCUSE ME, Dr. RICHARDS...

WHAT IS IT, ROBERTA?

YOU HAVE A *VISITOR* IN THE RECEPTION AREA.

PROFESSOR CHARLES XAVIER.

AND I AM ALSO ROUTING A PRIORITY TRANSMISSION TO THE COMMUNICATION CENTER...

...FROM THE *AVENGERS.*

PROFESSOR X AND *THE AVENGERS?!*

YOU HANDLE XAVIER, REED.

I'LL FIELD THE CALL, AND ALERT YOU IF IT'S IMPORTANT.

HEY, LANG! MENTION MY NAME IF THEM ASSEMBLERS ARE HAVIN' ANOTHER RECRUITIN' DRIVE!

I HEAR THEY AIN'T SO CHOOSY ABOUT *WHO* THEY CLOBBER!

WHERE'S Dr. RICHARDS?

WE HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE HIS SON, FRANKLIN, IS IN GRAVE DANGER.

AN ENTITY KNOWN AS ONSLAUGHT HAS ALREADY CORRUPTED CHARLES XAVIER AND --

YOU'VE HEARD QUITE ENOUGH, Mr. LANG.

TIME TO CLOSE YOUR EYES --

-- AND GO TO SLEEP!

HE'S IN CONFERENCE, BLACK WIDOW. CAN I HELP?

SOMETHING'S NOT RIGHT. I DON'T LIKE IT...

... HE BROKE THE TRANSMISSION WHILE YOU WERE STILL TALKING!

I DOUBT HE DID IT ON PURPOSE, BISHOP.

HOWEVER -- THAT'S WEIRD...

I CAN'T SEEM TO REESTABLISH COMMUNICATIONS!

IT MAY ONLY BE A TECHNICAL MALFUNCTION, BUT --

NO NEED TO FINISH, WIDOW.

WE CAN ALL GUESS WHAT'S HAPPENED!

UNAWARE OF WHAT JUST TRANSPIRED --

-- THE FF REACT TO A STUNNING PROPOSAL.

Y-YA *CAN'T* BE SERIOUS!

DID I HEAR YOU CORRECTLY, PROFESSOR?

YOU WANT US TO GIVE YOU *CUSTODY* OF FRANKLIN?!

RELATIONS BETWEEN HUMANS AND MUTANTS HAVE REACHED A MOST *CRITICAL JUNCTURE*, REED.

IT'S A NECESSARY *PRECAUTION* FOR THE CHILD'S OWN GOOD.

AT THE XAVIER INSTITUTE, HE'LL LEARN TO *CONTROL* AND *HONE* HIS MUTANT POWERS --

-- AND, MOST IMPORTANT, HE'LL BE *SAFE.*

SAFER THAN *HERE* -- WITH HIS FAMILY?!

I'M SORRY, PROFESSOR. I CAN'T ACCEPT THAT.

BESIDES, OUR SECURITY IS SECOND TO NONE!

I'M SURE YOU MEAN WELL, BUT WE'LL PASS ON YOUR OFFER.

NO ONE'S TAKING MY BABY FROM ME!

I CERTAINLY UNDERSTAND AND EMPATHIZE WITH YOUR RESPONSE, Mrs. RICHARDS...

... BUT YOU MUST CONSIDER WHAT'S *BEST* FOR THE CHILD.

YOU'RE BORDERING ON *IMPERTINENCE*, SIR. WE DON'T NEED AN OUTSIDER TO TELL US HOW TO RAISE THE BOY.

FRANKLIN BELONGS WITH *US*, AND WE'RE QUITE CAPABLE OF ATTENDING TO HIS SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS WITHOUT *YOUR* HELP.

EVEN AS THE DEBATE CONTINUES --

-- THE TORCH AND LYJA PREPARE TO EMBARK ON AN EMOTIONALLY CHARGED DISCOURSE OF THEIR OWN.

THIS *TALK* YOU WANTED...

... DOES IT CONCERN THE *OTHER* WOMAN I'VE BEEN SEEING...

... LAURA GREEN?

Uh...

... ACTUALLY...

... YES!

WHY DID JOHNNY MENTION LAURA? DOES HE SUSPECT THE TRUTH?

I'VE GOT TO GATHER MY COURAGE, AND TRY TO CALM DOWN.

IT DOESN'T MATTER WHAT HE'S SURMISED, I CAME HERE TO CONFESS THAT LAURA ISN'T *REAL.*

SHE'S ONLY A *GUISE* I ASSUMED TO BE NEAR HIM.

BUT THINGS GOT WAY OUT OF CONTROL --!

YOU GOT SOMETHING TO *SAY,* LADY?

SPILL IT!

YOU'RE *NOT* MAKING THIS EASY.

WHY SHOULD I?

YOU'VE BEEN PLAYING ME FOR A *CHUMP* EVER SINCE WE FIRST -- *HEY!*

LOOKS LIKE WE'VE GOT COMPANY. SOMEBODY'S TRYING TO SNEAK PAST OUR SECURITY BY *TELEPORTING* INTO THE HANGAR!

IT'S *LOCKJAW,* AND -- *WHOA!*

SOMETHING *BIG* MUST BE UP -- *REAL BIG* -- IF *X-GUYS* LIKE *ICEMAN* AND *BISHOP* ARE SUDDENLY HANGIN' WITH *AVENGERS* LIKE *CRYSTAL* AND *HAWKEYE!*

YOU GOT *THAT* RIGHT, TORCHIE OL' PAL.

WE COULD BE TALKING *END-OF-THE-WORLD*-TYPE BIG!

AND, AT THAT EXACT INSTANT...

SINCE *REASON* CANNOT CONVINCE YOU TO RELINQUISH THE CHILD...

... I WILL DISPENSE WITH *SUBTLETY!*

GET A LOAD'A OL' BALDY! HE'S SUDDENLY *GLOWIN'* LIKE THE FOURTH'A JULY!

LOOK SHARP, TEAM! THIS MAY NOT BE THE XAVIER WE KNOW!

YOU ARE CORRECT, Dr. RICHARDS.

CHARLES XAVIER IS MERELY MY *VESSEL.*

I TAKE WHAT I DESIRE --

-- AND WHAT I DESIRE IS THE *MUTANT CHILD!*

FOR I AM **ONSLAUGHT!**

ASIDE FROM THE DIFFERENCES IN NAME AND APPEARANCE, YOU'LL ALSO NOTE THAT I DIVERGE IN ANOTHER CRUCIAL FASHION...

KAPWOOM

TRUST ME, PEOPLE...

...I REALLY DOUBT THIS ONSLAUGHT CHARACTER WOULD DARE INVADE FF HEADQUARTERS.

YOU WOULDN'T BE SO CONFIDENT --

-- IF YOU HAD EXPERIENCED HIS POWER!

I DON'T *KNOW* YOU VERY WELL, BISHOP. I'M SURE ONSLAUGHT'S TOUGH... BY *X-MEN* STANDARDS... BUT WE'VE TAKEN ON THE LIKES OF *DOC DOOM* AND *GALACTUS!*

JOHNNY...

REED?!

WHA-*WHAT HAPPENED?!*

X-XAVIER MORPHED INTO ANOTHER BEING!

WE BARELY SURVIVED HIS INITIAL PSI-BLAST!

JOHNNY -- IT'S BAD.

HE WANTS FRANKLIN!

HANG *TOUGH*, PARTNER!

I WON'T LET *ANYTHING* HARM MY NEPHEW.

WHERE IS FRANKLIN? HOW DO WE KNOW HE AIN'T BEEN SNATCHED ALREADY?!

ANYBODY SEEN 'IM --

-- OR THE TRUCK THAT HIT ME?!

ROBERTA! I NEED YOU TO PINPOINT *FRANKLIN* AND THE GUEST ORIGINALLY IDENTIFIED AS *PROFESSOR XAVIER!*

ROBERTA?!

IT'S NO USE. ONSLAUGHT MUST HAVE ALREADY TAKEN OUR INTERNAL COMMUNI-LINKS OFF-LINE.

HEY! WHERE'S LANG?

THAT'S *THREE* WE NEED TO FIND!

WE'LL COVER MORE GROUND IF WE BREAK INTO TEAMS.

AGREED!

BARELY FIFTEEN SECONDS LATER --

-- THE FIRST SUCH TEAM BLAZES TOWARD THE FF'S COMMUNICATIONS CENTER!

CRYSTAL! NATHAN! FOLLOW ME!

WHOA! WHAT A MESS! WE FOUND SCOTT --

-- BUT IT LOOKS LIKE ONSLAUGHT TOOK A BAZOOKA TO OUR COMMUNICATIONS EQUIPMENT!

HOW IS HE, CRYS?

UNCONSCIOUS... BUT *ALIVE!*

AND YOU NEEDN'T WORRY ABOUT CALLING IN FOR BACK-UP!

I ALREADY DISPATCHED *LOCKJAW* TO --

SHHH!

DON'T SAY TOO MUCH! WE MAY NOT BE ALONE!

INCREASING HIS TEMPERATURE, THE HUMAN TORCH SUDDENLY FLOODS THE ROOM WITH WAVES OF FLASHING HEAT, AND THEN --!

LOOK!

MY FLAMES ARE SILHOUETTING A FIGURE STANDING IN THE CORNER!

HE'S GOTTA BE *ONSLAUGHT!*

YAHOO! FIGHTING SIDE-BY-SIDE WITH YOU BRINGS BACK THE OLD DAYS... WHEN YOU AND I WERE AN ITEM.

THINGS WERE SIMPLER THEN. YOU DIDN'T NEED A SCORECARD TO TELL THE BAD GUYS FROM THE GOOD, AND YOU KNEW WHO YOU COULD TRUST.

SWAK

YOU SHOULD HAVE HEEDED YOUR COMPANION'S ADVICE, YOUNG MAN.

THIS JOKER MAY BE A *CHALLENGE* FOR THE X-GUYS, BUT HE'S STRICTLY *AMATEUR NIGHT* TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

WITH A CASUAL THOUGHT, I CAN INSTANTLY SEIZE CONTROL OF HER *ELEMENTAL POWERS* --

-- AND EXTINGUISH YOUR FLAME AS I SEND YOU CRASHING INTO THE CEILING!

WHAT'S GOTTEN INTO *YOU*, JOHNNY STORM? YOU'RE ACTING LIKE AN OVERCONFIDENT *HOTHEAD!*

BE CAREFUL! YOU MUSTN'T UNDERESTIMATE ONSLAUGHT'S POWER!

DON'T SWEAT IT, CRYS! I'LL REMIND YOU OF THOSE WORDS WHEN WE'RE LAUGHING ABOUT THIS LATER.

AND NOW, CRYSTAL...

... DEAR, SWEET CRYSTAL...

... WHATEVER SHALL I DO WITH YOU?

WHILE I AM LOATHE TO INJURE YOU --

-- I CANNOT PERMIT YOU TO INTERFERE WITH MY PLANS!

THUS I SHALL CAUSE YOU TO *BELIEVE* THAT YOU'VE BEEN TRANSPORTED INTO A TRACKLESS *VOID!*

INTERESTING! YOU APPARENTLY HAVE HIGHLY DEVELOPED *TELEPATHIC* AS WELL AS *TELEKINETIC* SKILLS!

A PITY THEY DIDN'T WARN YOU ABOUT MY PRESENCE.

WHILE I'M HARDLY A WARRIOR LIKE *JOHNNY* OR *CRYSTAL*, MY ARMOR WAS DESIGNED TO SIPHON MY GRANDSON'S *PSIONIC ENERGIES* --

-- AND IT *SHOULD* WORK JUST AS WELL AGAINST --

YAARGH!

SHOULD...

... AND, PERHAPS, WOULD...

... IF YOU HAD SUFFICIENT TIME, OLD MAN!

FAREWELL, MY FRIENDS!

I MUST NOW RENEW MY SEARCH FOR THE CHILD!

BUT TIME IS A *LUXURY* WHICH YOU MUST BE *DENIED!*

SPRAWLED IN FRONT OF A LARGE-SCREEN TELEVISION IN THE FF'S MEDIA ROOM --

-- THE YOUNG RICHARDS BOY IS SEEMINGLY OBLIVIOUS --

-- TO EVERYTHING EXCEPT HIS FAVORITE VIDEO!

SAVE YOUR ARROWS, HAWKEYE! I'LL TACKLE HIM!

YOUR ALIEN THOUGHT PATTERNS MAKE IT DIFFICULT FOR ME TO DOMINATE YOUR MIND, WOMAN!

YOU MAKE A MOST APPETIZING *BAIT*...

... BUT YOU COULDN'T HAVE HOPED TO FOOL *ME!*

Uh-Oh!

THE YOUNG BOY'S FEATURES BEGIN TO *WAVER* --

-- AND ARE SOON REPLACED BY THOSE OF A BEAUTIFUL SKRULL!

BEN! HAWKEYE! HE'S HERE --!

PWOK

-AURRK-

BUT I CAN EASILY RESORT TO PURE BRAWN!

YA GOT A LOT TA ANSWER FER, MISTER!

ASIDE FROM EVERYTHIN' ELSE, MY SUPER DELUXE IS GROWIN' COLD 'CAUSE A YOU!

LYJA! GET OUT OF THE WAY!

YOU'RE BLOCKING MY SHOT!

YA BETTER PRAY LYJA'S *OKAY*, BUDDY BOY, OR THEY'LL NEED A *Q-TIP* TA MOP UP WHAT'S LEFT A' YA 'CAUSE --

-- IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

AS POWERFUL AS YOU MAY BE, I CAN GEOMETRICALLY INCREASE MY OWN STRENGTH MERELY BY WILLING IT SO!

GOOD FER YOU!

I'LL TRY TA REMEMBER THAT LI'L FACT WHEN I TELL MY FRIENDLY NEIGHBORHOOD FAN CLUB HOW I FLATTENED YA!

I FOUGHT PLENTY 'A CLOWNS WHO CLAIMED TA BE *STRONGER*'N ME --

-- BUT NONE WERE EVER *TOUGHER!*

YA MIGHT AS WELL GIVE UP NOW --

-- BECAUSE I'M TOO BLASTED ORNERY TA *QUIT!*

KRAKOOM KRAKOOM

STOP IT, BEN! *STOP IT!* HE'S MESSING WITH YOUR MIND!

YOU'RE ONLY WASTING YOURSELF AGAINST SOMEONE WHO ISN'T *REAL!*

SAVE YOUR BREATH, HAWKEYE! THE THING ONLY SEES WHAT I WISH HIM TO SEE --

-- AS WILL *YOU!*

AARGH!

4A FEW MINUTES LATER, IN ANOTHER ROOM...

DON'T *MOVE!*

BUT, Mrs. RICHARDS --

YOU HEARD ME, BISHOP. *STAND STILL!*

FRANKLIN MAY NOT *APPEAR* TO BE HERE, BUT WE CAN'T TRUST OUR *EYES* ANYMORE.

MY *INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD* IS PROBING THIS ROOM JUST IN CASE *ONSLAUGHT* IS TOYING WITH OUR PERCEPTIONS!

YOU CAN SAVE YOURSELF THE EFFORT, DEAR WOMAN.

I AM PRESENT, AND I WAS INDEED PLAYING WITH YOUR SENSES.

SADLY, HOWEVER, I HAVE YET TO ACQUIRE YOUR CHILD.

STEP *ASIDE*, Mrs. RICHARDS!

ONSLAUGHT IS *MY* RESPONSIBILITY!

WRONG! HE'S IN *MY* HEADQUARTERS, ATTACKING *MY* FAMILY AND THREATENING *MY* SON!

THAT MAKES HIM **MINE!**

HOW QUAINT!

YOU'RE ACTUALLY FIGHTING OVER ME!

JUST LIKE CHILDREN!

HE'S RIGHT! WE'VE GOT TO WORK TOGETHER!

HIT ME WITH YOUR STRONGEST *FORCE FIELD!* I CAN *ABSORB* AND *RECHANNEL* IT AGAINST HIM!

BUT, BISHOP... IT'S FAR MORE *POWERFUL* THAN YOU IMAGINE!

IT COULD *KILL* YOU!

WE DON'T HAVE MUCH CHOICE! IT MAY BE OUR ONLY HOPE! *DO IT!*

DO IT!

FWOOM

AYARRGH!

FOR THE SAKE OF HER CHILD, THE INVISIBLE WOMAN BATTERS HER COMRADE, AGAIN AND AGAIN, WITH EVER-INCREASING FORCE --

-- FORCE WHICH IS IMMEDIATELY CONVERTED INTO HIGH INTENSITY PLASMA BLASTS --

-- WHICH SOON SLAMS ONSLAUGHT TO HIS KNEES!

LOOK--!

HIS FORM. HE'S *CHANGING.*

HE SEEMS TO BE REVERTING BACK TO *PROFESSOR X!*

HOW CAN WE BE SURE? IT COULD BE ANOTHER MIND TRICK!

I-IT'S NO TRICK! I OWE YOU MY LIFE!

Y-YOUR ASSAULT -- COMBINED WITH MY EARLIER ENCOUNTER WITH YOUR FATHER-IN-LAW'S ENERGY-SAPPING ARMOR -- HAVE FINALLY MANAGED TO *DRIVE* ONSLAUGHT FROM MY SUBCONSCIOUS!

T-THE DANGER HAS PASSED...

BUT ONLY TEMPORARILY!

BISHOP, IF WE ARE TO SAVE THE BOY, YOU MUST GET ME TO *PHOENIX!*

ONLY SHE CAN ESTABLISH THE *PSIONIC PROTECTION* I'LL NEED TO SAFEGUARD AGAINST ONSLAUGHT'S RETURN!

PROFESSOR -- WHY DID ONSLAUGHT WANT THE BOY?

YOU MUST TELL US! *WHY* DOES HE NEED *FRANKLIN RICHARDS?*

C-COME CLOSER, BISHOP.

P-PLEASE HELP ME...

...YOU TRUSTING FOOL!

TOO LATE, THE TIME-LOST MUTANT REALIZES HIS ERROR!

HE ALLOWED HIS PAST LOYALTY TO XAVIER TO OVERWHELM HIS BATTLE-HARDENED INSTINCTS --

-- AND IT PROVED A MOST COSTLY MISTAKE!

FASCINATING! ONSLAUGHT HAS GONE TO CONSIDERABLE RISK TO OBTAIN THE RICHARDS BOY... BUT WHY NOW?

THOUGH THE CHILD IS DESTINED TO POSSESS VAST TELEPATHIC AND TELEKINETIC ABILITIES, AS WELL AS THE POWER TO REARRANGE THE MOLECULAR STRUCTURE OF MATTER --

-- HE IS *YEARS* FROM ACHIEVING HIS PSIONIC POTENTIAL.

WHY HAVE YOU BEEN DRAWN HERE, *UATU?* DOES ONSLAUGHT TRULY HAVE THE *MEANS* TO UNLEASH THE MUTANT CHILD'S LATENT POSSIBILITIES?

HAS HE ALSO THE PURPOSE FOR THESE TALENTS?

POSED LIKE A GOD ON THE NEW JERSEY SHORE AND INVISIBLE TO THE MORTAL EYE, THE DREADED APOCALYPSE -- DEIGNS NOT TO GLANCE AT HIS SILENT COMPANION.

*UATU IS A MEMBER OF A VASTLY POWERFUL EXTRATERRESTRIAL RACE WHOSE SOLE DUTY IS TO PASSIVELY **OBSERVE** THE PHENOMENA OF THE UNIVERSE.*

HIS MERE PRESENCE INDICATES THE APPROACH OF A CRITICAL JUNCTURE TO THE PLANET EARTH.

IT MUST BE VERY *DIFFICULT* FOR YOU, UATU. THOUGH YOU ACTUALLY *CARE* ABOUT THE FANTASTIC FOUR, YOUR SACRED NON-INTERFERENCE OATH PREVENTS YOU FROM AIDING THEM.

I, ON THE OTHER HAND, ONLY WISH TO SEE THE *STRONG* SURVIVE... AS THEY SHOULD.

PERHAPS THE DAY OF THE SUPER-HUMAN IS FINALLY *OVER...* AND WE MUST NOW WELCOME *THE AGE OF ONSLAUGHT!*

AGAIN, UATU CHOOSES NOT TO RESPOND.

HE MERELY CONTINUES TO WATCH.

MEANWHILE --

-- OBLIVIOUS TO THE VARIOUS BATTLES WHICH HAVE RAGED IN THE ROOMS BEYOND HIM --

-- FRANKLIN RICHARDS SAVORS ANOTHER MILK-DIPPED CHOCOLATE MACADAMIA NUT CRUNCH.

AH! THERE YOU ARE --! I'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU.

I WAS HUNGRY. YOU WANT A COOKIE?

THEY'RE REAL GOOD.

I HAVE NO INTEREST IN COOKIES.

I ONLY WANT TO *PLAY.*

SOUNDS LIKE FUN, *CHARLIE.*

ANXIOUS TO JOIN HIS PLAYMATE, FRANKLIN DOESN'T REALIZE THAT "CHARLIE" IS NEITHER REAL... NOR A FRIEND...

BUT MERELY AN ILLUSION CREATED BY ONSLAUGHT!

COME CLOSER. I BROUGHT SOMETHING TO SHOW YOU.

NO!

SPWAK

A SINGLE WORD, AS SHARP AND SHRILL AS IT IS UNEXPECTED.

YET IT MORE THAN ENCAPSULATES A FATHER'S ALL-CONSUMING LOVE --

-- AND HIS UNFLAGGING DESPERATION TO SAVE HIS SON!

REED--!

YOUR SON -- IT'S LIKE HE CAN'T SEE OR *HEAR* US!

ONSLAUGHT MUST BE *MANIPULATING* HIS PERCEPTIONS, ICEMAN!

THE MONSTER'S PLAYING WITH FRANKLIN'S MIND, BUT I CAN'T -- I *WON'T* -- ALLOW IT TO CONTINUE!

BULKING HIS MALLEABLE BODY TO THING-LIKE PROPORTIONS, REED RICHARDS LASHES OUT AT THE ONE WHO WOULD STEAL HIS BELOVED CHILD.

BEFORE TODAY, BOBBY DRAKE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF HIS COMPANION AS A STUFFY SCIENTIST MORE SUITED TO MIXING CHEMICALS THAN BATTLING CRIMINALS.

NOW, AT LONG LAST, THE ICEMAN KNOWS WHY THIS MAN IS CALLED Mr. FANTASTIC!

TALK TO ME, ONSLAUGHT!

YOU'VE APPARENTLY CONSTRUCTED AN ELABORATE FANTASY TO WIN FRANKLIN'S COOPERATION, BUT *WHY? WHY?!*

DARK CLAW

AHALGAH OVERPOWER

SINCE *CHARLES XAVIER* POSSESSES ONE OF THE MOST POWERFUL *TELEPATHIC MINDS* ON THIS PLANET --

-- I'D GUESS YOU'RE INTERESTED IN MY SON'S UNDEVELOPED ABILITY TO RESTRUCTURE *MATTER!*

LEAVE HIM ALONE, FOR PITY'S SAKE! HE'S ONLY A *CHILD!*

GET *OUT* OF HIS MIND... BEFORE YOU CAUSE INCALCULABLE AND IRREVOCABLE *DAMAGE!*

THOUGH I DON'T PRETEND TO FATHOM YOUR REAL *GOAL* OR YOUR TRUE *POWER*, I'LL *DIE* BEFORE I'LL ALLOW YOU TO *EXPLOIT* MY SON!

I'LL **STOP** *YOU! I'LL FIND A WAY TO STOP YOU!*

GIVEN SUFFICIENT TIME, YOU *MIGHT...*

... BUT I CAN PREVENT *YOU* AND *ICEMAN* FROM INTERFERING --

-- WITH ONLY A CASUAL *THOUGHT!*

AT THAT VERY INSTANT, BACK IN THE FF'S MEDIA ROOM...

OH, MAN! ONSLAUGHT'S BEEN RIPPING THROUGH US LIKE A SERRATED KNIFE ON A FRESH STEAK!

LOOKS LIKE HE EVEN FLATTENED *BEN, HAWKEYE* AND --

-- LYJA!

LYJA!

=UNHHH=

THANK GOD YOU'RE OKAY!

CAN YOU EVER FORGIVE ME FOR THE WAY I'VE BEEN ACTING?

I'VE BEEN A TOTAL JERK!

P-PLEASE DON'T APOLOGIZE TO ME, JOHNNY.

THERE'S SOMETHING I SHOULD -- I *MUST* -- TELL YOU BEFORE ANOTHER MOMENT PASSES!

YOU MEAN THE FACT THAT YOU'RE *LAURA GREEN?*

H-HOW LONG HAVE YOU KNOWN?

I GUESS I'VE ALWAYS KNOWN... ON SOME LEVEL.

BUT I COULD NO LONGER IGNORE THE TRUTH AFTER LAURA -- I MEAN -- *YOU* RECENTLY KISSED ME GOODBYE.

AS SHOWN IN FF#414 -- Sentimental Suze.

NOBODY COULD EVER KISS LIKE *YOU,* PRETTY LADY.

W-WHERE DO WE GO FROM HERE?

WE'LL FIGURE THAT OUT LATER.

MUCH LATER!

HEY! I HATE TA PLAY *SPOILSPORT,* BUT WE STILL GOTTA FACE *ONSLAUGHT!*

YOU KIDS CAN GO BACK TA PLAYIN' KISSY-FACE AFTER WE'VE CLOBBERED THAT CREEP!

IF YER LUCKY, I MIGHT EVEN SHARE MY PIZZA WIT' YA!

MEANWHILE...

MAN! YOU GOT A GREAT COLLECTION OF TRADING CARDS.

WANT TO SEE MORE?

SURE.

GIVE ME YOUR HAND --

-- AND I'LL SHOW YOU A VERY SPECIAL PLACE.

N-NO, FRANKLIN.

P-PLEASE DON'T!

LET'S GO, FRANKLIN.

WE'RE GOING TO HAVE SOME REAL *FUN* NOW!

THAT'S FAR ENOUGH, MISTER. IF YOU DARE TOUCH MY SON --

-- *YOU'RE DEAD!*

HE PICKED US OFF ONE BY ONE, BUT IF WE ALL ATTACK *TOGETHER* --!

WE MAY DIE TOGETHER.

MAYBE, BUT WE'VE RUN OUT OF OPTIONS.

HIT HIM HARD!

WITH CONCENTRATED FURY, THE HEROES **STRIKE** --!

HAMMERED BY INVISIBLE JAVELINS, PLASMA BURSTS, ICE SPIKES, FLAMING SPEARS AND EXPLOSIVE ARROWS, **ONSLAUGHT** *STAGGERS.*

HIS DEFEAT SEEMS CERTAIN FOR ONE BRIEF INSTANT...

--BUT THEN...

IS ANYTHING *WRONG*, CHARLIE?

WHEN ARE WE *LEAVING*?

SOON, FRANKLIN...

...I JUST NEED A MOMENT --

-- TO CLEAN UP A FEW *LOOSE ENDS!*

BAM

THERE --! THAT SHOULD DO IT!

NOW, MY YOUNG FRANKLIN... YOU WILL GIVE ME A GIFT.

A GIFT *BEYOND* RECKONING...

To Be Continued...

IN X-MEN 55

MINUTEMEN

Blunt Man